

News Release

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Endangered Species Act Listing of Rare Native Idaho Plant Remains Warranted

Biologists Reaffirm Slickspot Peppergrass as Threatened Species Following Legal Ruling

BOISE, Idaho – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reaffirmed the listing and threatened status of a plant native to the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem of Idaho. The Service determined slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*) remains warranted for listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The re-review of the species' status was necessary because the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho vacated the Service's original 2009 listing determination and remanded the final rule back to the Service in 2012. In response to that ruling, made as a result of what the Court determined to be a lack of clarity surrounding the phrase "foreseeable future," the Service has defined the term to mean at least 50 years, the time period in which the currently known threats to the species are likely to cause it to become endangered.

"We look forward to moving beyond litigation so we can focus on working with our partners, as we have done with a variety of other species, on collaborative conservation of Idaho's rangelands," said Dennis Mackey, acting state supervisor for the Service's Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office. "Together we can address primary threats to this plant, such as fire and invasive species, so it no longer requires the protections of the ESA."

Slickspot peppergrass is a flowering plant native to southwestern Idaho. It occurs primarily in specialized microsites known as slickspots in portions of six Idaho counties: Ada, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee and Payette. Slickspot peppergrass occurs in a very small geographic range of about 16,000 acres. A final decision on critical habitat for the species, which was proposed in 2014, will follow at a later date.

For more information about slickspot peppergrass conservation, the proposed rule and the *Federal Register* Notice, please visit <http://bit.ly/2boYJ4P>.

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